EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

November 2026

OAK PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Find an accessible version of this document at oppl.org/board.

Supporting Staff Learning

As referenced in the Learning portion of this month's Strategic Priorities Report, supporting the professional development of all staff is an important component of the library's commitment to providing responsive, informed service to the community. **This fall, the Oak Park Public Library supported more than 20 staff members in attending a range of professional conferences, workshops, and other learning opportunities.**

The events represented a broad cross-section of the library profession, offering opportunities to explore emerging issues, share practical approaches, and connect with colleagues at the local, regional, and national levels. Staff represented our library at the Joint Conference of Librarians of Color, the Illinois Library Association Annual Conference, and the Othering & Belonging Conference. Additional learning opportunities included the Association for Library Service to Children National Institute, the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services Annual Conference, the International Symposium on Academic Makerspaces, and the Back in Circulation Conference. Together, these gatherings gave staff the opportunity to collaborate with peers, exchange experiences, and take an active part in shaping approaches to modern library work.

We consider sharing what is learned an essential part of the professional development process. **Staff who attended these events had an opportunity to share key insights, introduce useful tools and resources, and discuss ideas for programs and services with colleagues at two "Takeaway Sessions" open to the entire organization.** These sessions provided an intentional space to amplify individual experiences and ensure the broader library benefits from what was learned.

It is important to recognize that this work takes energy, commitment, and time, both from staff participating in offsite events and from those managing daily operations at the library. It is a true library-wide effort to support staff attendance at conferences, and I am thankful for the collaboration that makes it possible — from assisting with travel plans and registration, to managing changes in desk schedules, to tracking invoices.

Ongoing professional development helps staff stay informed about evolving practices across the library field, build lasting connections with peers, and bring fresh ideas back to our community. **The library will continue to support opportunities for staff learning and the sharing of knowledge across the organization, and we are grateful to the board for their ongoing support of these efforts.**

Respectfully submitted,
Elsworth Carman, Executive Director